# NEWS & NOTES

THE ETHICAL UNION

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## COMMENTARY

### THE DILEMMA OF PROGRESS

Right thinking, that is to say healthy thinking, depends upon a person's general state of mind which in turn depends upon successful living. We do not expect to find balanced and sane views from an individual embittered by frustration. The same thing applies to collective thought in society. Applying this to the political sphere we find that we can only expect fruitful thinking from the contented person and he although admirably fitted to give dispassionate intellectual consideration to problems has no impulse just because of his contentment to initiate social change. Thus there is the position that the possibility of beneficial change rests upon the situation that hinges upon complete disaster. Conditions must bring us to the brink of disaster before change can occur and one is reminded of the dangerous game that children play with motor cars of "last one over".

In our own time it has needed two world wars and the gathering storms of a third before the politicians and people of the stronger nations have been ready to take some practical steps to produce conditions in which peace might be attained. There is in consequence now a new attitude to relations between nations. It is not now thought a purely external matter whether some nation or other goes to the devil in its own way. It is coming to be seen that difficulties of any country are to a degree the concern of all. This is all to the good, but the question still remains whether we will just get over. We are very near the stage in which loss of nerve will render us incapable of constructive thought and we shall turn to some salvation creed, giving up hope of the world.

## THE SALVATION CREEDS

Our criticism of salvation creeds, notably of the two that concern us most deeply, christianity and marxism is often misunderstood. Frequently it is thought that it is the aspirations of these two systems of thought that we reject when it is the fact of their turning away from the world wherein our chief objection lies. Critics who understand us more clearly criticize us for fidelity to reason. People who have themselves rejected reason naturally pour scorn on those who do not. St. Paul thought the Greeks were absurd because a mere matter of reason stood between them and the acceptance of Christianity and T. S. Eliot in our own time speaks of "the well lighted desert of atheism". In fact a favourably developed emotional life is as fully compatible with humanism as with religion based upon the psychology of defeat.

Another thing needs emphasizing about the humanist. He does not think that he is a person superior to circumstances, immune to the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, stiffnecked in his pride over his retention of his intellect when others are giving way with abandon to their emotions. The humanist is as susceptible to despair as any other person, but like the sensible person in the conduct of his private life he tries not to base his life upon the mood of those weaker moments. The humanist has an indomitable faith that life can be made worth living and although he may be bowled off his feet far too many times for his contentment of mind, he feels that he ought to make an effort to get on to them again. The acid test of a humanist is whether he looks to this life for fulfilment, not accepting the view that it is but the scene of inevitable frustration.

Seeing that the conditions of living preclude the expectation of a smooth sea with untroubled skies, adaptation to meet at least periodical rough conditions is a necessity, the mind's eye must be attuned to accepting grey skies.

## HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL SOCIETY
## FIFTY YEARS, 1900—1950

Fifty years of unabated and continuous activity as a group, with only once a simple change of nomenclature from Institute to the more unassuming "Society" gives us a right to some pride of place in the annals of the British Ethical Movement. In fact, the roots of the Hampstead branch reach to its origins, as the founders of the movement in this country, among them Professors Muirhead and Bosanquet, and Mrs. Gilliland Husband were also amongst the prime movers of the founding of the Hampstead Ethical Institute. Seen in perspective this is not surprising, since these sources proved to be tributaries rather than the main stream, and throughout its history the Hampstead group has characteristically upheld an intellectual outlook, tinged with a hopeful idealism, based on the nature of its relatively middle-class, prosperous and intellectually alert class of residents,—yet sustained and inspired by the main stream of the movement, which had its two strong currents in the progressive secularisation of non-conformism on the one hand, and on the other the attempt to introduce a sense of corporate dedication to the tasks of rationalism and ethicism.

The relative phases of prosperity and adversity of the times naturally reflected the extent within which this practical optimism could function—it is not surprising therefore that 1900-1914 was its most prosperous period. Those were the days of congregations of a hundred and more, meeting in the concert hall of the Hampstead Conservatoire, with a fine organ for the hymn singing and musical programmes, which were an important feature. They were the days when such speakers as John M. Robertson, Joseph McCabe, Dr. Stanton Coit, J. A. Hobson and Delisle Burns were



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heard. The fact that the originator of the Ethical Movement in New York was a Jew, of German birth, and that he had associated it there with practical social efforts, contributed to its appeal to the strong element of German-Jewish settlement in Hampstead, and this has remained throughout an important portion of the membership. The writer recalls the Sunday School for children which met in those days, and that one of the assistant instructors was a niece of Dr. Adler. The moving spirit of this school was the inspiring teacher, Mrs. Gilliland Husband, whose connection with the origins of the movement has already been mentioned.

The first world war constituted a considerable setback. Chief of its effects, which of course applied to all religious institutions, was the breakdown of the social habit of attending Sunday morning meetings. In the first phase of relaxation from the war strain, there was also a general relapse to superstitious or fundamentalist beliefs. In addition a particular difficulty which Hampstead encountered was that a considerable number of the German-Jewish element tended as the result of the anti-alien propaganda of 1914-18 to feel isolated and to become conscious of its separateness and to lose faith in the universalist ideas of our movement . The practical outcome of all this was that we were obliged to meet in a smaller hall at the Conservatoire and when in 1928, the building was closed to be transformed into the present Embassy Theatre, we were obliged to undergo a number of successive moves, as places changed hands or became in one or another way unsuitable. The losses in membership affected the financial position, and the changes of place resulted in changes in the form of service, which became simpler, and the singing of hymns was given up, although some music as interlude was retained for much longer.

In spite of these difficulties, the years between the wars were by no means unfruitful—a strong nucleus of active workers held loyally together and there was a spirit of fellowship which radiated outwards to larger circles. This was eminently due to the leadership throughout the years 1918 to 1935 of our much loved president, R. Dimsdale Stocker, whose warm and genial personality permeated the activities of the Society. Throughout most of this time, he not only spoke regularly each month, but organised the programme of Sunday speakers. It was largely in this spirit of fellowship that so much attention was devoted to the social side, so that no sessions passed without occasional evenings devoted to games, or music or dancing. Memorable among the social events were also the end of session dinners, usually twice a year at which prominent speakers and representatives of the local press were invited as guests.

After the regrettably early death of Mr. Dimsdale Stocker we continued his tradition and have been very fortunate to be able to have now for many years as his successor so distinguished a personality as Mr. J. F. Horrabin. During this time, important changes in the outlook of the Society were taking place, younger members were stirred by the decline in the old appeals, were obtaining more influence. The growing crisis in Europe with the growth of Fascism and anti-semitism, and the Spanish war focussed attention on the inextricability of ethical and political issues, and under the heading "Living Issues of the Day" the programmes were arranged so as to bring our attitude on these matters to the fore. During this time we affiliated with the National Council for Civil Liberties, whose secretary, Mr Ronald Kidd, was an inspiration to vigilance and courage in these matters. We also actively co-operated in the local moves to counteract endeavours of the Fascist movement to foment anti-alien prejudice in Hampstead.

After the outbreak of the second world war, meetings were changed from evenings to afternoons, and later on were carried on regularly at members' houses. Since 1946, fortnightly Sunday evenings in public rooms have been resumed, but in order to keep together those to whom Saturday afternoons suited better, these have been carried on monthly and continue to serve a social purpose.

The incursion of two world wars in the half-century of our existence accounts largely for our vicissitudes. Whereas in the first, the setback was mainly due to the shock of disillusion from the ideas of inevitable progress of civilisation, that of the second war was rather a matter of dispersal and disruption of the citizen's normal way of living. At least, they have brought about a greater sense of realism to the problems of human living and everywhere the world is coming to a fuller acceptance of the interdependence of all mankind. Our task is now to play our part so that this perception is so acted upon as to become fruitful of greater tolerance, mutual help and personal creativity. To this end we have restated our aims, with an emphasis on social responsibility, and a declaration of our belief in the ability of human nature to organise and maintain modes of life conducive to the health and happiness of all.

E. H. ELKAN

# *A HUMANIST'S NOTEBOOK*

A most welcome piece of news is the decision of the South Place Ethical Society to affiliate to the Union. Whatever may have been the differences between South Place and the Ethical Union on its foundation in the eighteen-nineties they have long since disappeared, and for years past co-operation has been going on in the most amicable fashion, the formal act of affiliation only reinforcing these friendly relations.

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Another piece of news which demonstrates the trend towards co-operation and the getting of common action is the decision of the Ethical Union to join with the South Place Ethical Society and the Rationalist Press Association in the formation of a body to be known as The Humanist Council for the pursuit of common aims on specific practical issues. It is the intention that the Council should be open to affiliation of any organization interested in furthering issues determined by reference to humanist principles.

At the invitation of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies the Ethical Union is participating in an enquiry into the subject of Freedom. UNESCO has decided on a project to make philosophical analyses of fundamental concepts in present day ideological conflicts and has chosen Freedom as the first subject to be investigated. The International Federation of Philosophical Societies has been appointed by UNESCO to collate philosophical interpretations of the concept and conditions of freedom with the idea of de-limiting the divergencies in ideology. A paper has been prepared by H. J. Blackham on behalf of the Union as a contribution to the enquiry.

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The article elsewhere in this issue on the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Hampstead Ethical Society throws into relief the ephemeral character of most voluntary bodies without paid helpers at the same time as it emphasizes the devotion of those who have made it possible in this case to carry on without. In the case of Hampstead the continuity has been effected in the personality of Mr. Eric Elkan for the past thirty years and indeed the Society is indebted to him for the greater part of the work of running it. When consideration is given to the dozens of ethical societies that were formed of which only three of the older ones relying entirely on voluntary help survive, it would seem advisable in future foundations of ethical societies to consider making plans for securing premises and the eventual employment of a paid leader, if but on a part-time basis. The Roman Church which is very successful on the organizational side always plans to get premises at the earliest possible moment in a new venture even if the building only

consists of lath and corrugated iron and is of the tiniest dimensions.

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People like to see some visible sign of an organization, a building is something tangible to attach one's affections to, the spiritual feeling requires concrete expression as complement. Premises give an impression, and one that is not usually false, of permanence. Endowments are hardly ever attracted to organizations that are without property; not many people who acquire property themselves and are therefore in a position to make endowments remain members of an organization without property, and even those who do remain attached leave their money elsewhere. The taking of premises is usually, too, an act of faith, for in very few cases is it done without commitments being assumed by the members concerned; people who have the courage to take on commitments attract others with this quality and thus a self-reliant and positive community is created.

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In our time there are two things that are going out, if they have not already gone: the man like Dr. Coit with private means who can self-employ himself in a movement and the voluntary helper who if not well-off has a good deal of time upon his hands. The incidence of taxation which has altered radically in the past decade and is still on the move is eliminating people with unearned incomes and it was unearned income that frequently allowed not only the comparatively well-off man to dispose of his time at his pleasure but it was often the possession of a small private income that allowed the part-time worker not to be too commercial in the disposition of his time. The person referred to here is not, of course, the one who just does an hour or two now and then, they still remain, but the person who is able to spend a considerable proportion of his time on the movement in which he is interested. Movements must turn more and more to the professional worker nowadays. The Ethical movement could well employ another half dozen fulltime workers had it the finance at its command. There is a certain minimun level of staffing that is necessary before an organization can be effective, some extra help would be of enormous benefit to us.

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In the last of his B.B.C. talks on cosmology Fred Hoyle turned to the subject of creation. How and when, he asked, did consciousness first occur and how can it be accounted for in a purely materialist philosophy. Like so many subjects that receive an enormous amount of consideration this seems to be a case where there is no problem at all. Consciousness is a thing that evolves like the rest of nature and is linked with the evolution of the nervous system and the brain. Any attempt to define what constituted the border between a lack of consciousness and consciousness would bound to be arbitrary in character as with any other formal classification. But having established agreement upon criteria one would find border line cases in which it would be impossible to satisfy oneself whether they should be included or not. Which head teacher can determine with exact precision every student who should be in the Upper or Lower Fourth? What there is no doubt of is that consciousness exists in animals. Does the animal that takes shelter from the wind do so out of a sense of consciousness of the forces at work or is it intuition? There is certainly consciousness in the dog, an animal able to consider alternative courses of action. What are people trying to make out who ask such questions? Presumably, that there is something beyond nature as an agency in creating consciousness. If that is accepted, God must be a dog, probably a St. Bernard, because it is a well-known fact that God creates in the image of himself.

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**PEACE MEETINGS**

Three meetings have been arranged, see under Anouncements, for the purpose of clarifying the humanist standpoint on the most important issues connected with the preservation of peace today. The meetings will be held in The Library, Conway Hall, the first, on Monday, November 27th.

## ON A SUNDAY MORNING ADDRESS

This concerns an address given at the Ethical Church by Virginia Flemming on *The Satisfactions of this Life*, a subject that must cause much interior searching, whether from a Christian or Humanist approach. Plutarch, in his brilliant essay on the texture of our life, *De Iside et Osiride*, has this:

> "The world is neither thrown about by wild chance, without intelligence, reason, and guidance, nor is it dominated and directed by one rational being with a rudder or with gentle and easy reins as it were; but on the contrary there are in it several different things, and those made up of bad as well as good; or rather (to speak more plainly) Nature produces nothing here but what is mixed and tempered . . ."

And it is just this "mixed and tempered" character of our life for which we have to find a meaning. Our speaker pointed out the difference of stress in the message of the Ethical Church of today compared to the sermons and discourses of about thirty years ago. It had been then abundantly shown that morality based on motives of reward and punishment was an entirely wrong and unstable foundations. That still holds good. Then the speaker went on to deprecate "the craving for the immutable and the eternal", the note of today's ethical message being that the satisfactions of this life should be and are sufficient without looking for anything beyond. But this depends on the nature of this satisfaction — on what is it grounded? Our cat is satisfied with a good meal, he enjoys basking in the sun; human satisfaction must be on a mental and moral plane. Mrs. Flemming mentioned Michael Scott, the heroic clergyman and his work for the African people, and she did say she would not condemn beliefs about another life as necessarily damaging. But the Christian, with his other-world outlook tends to look upon this life with its transiency and frustration as merely the prelude to a better state, and in itself not worth living. Life in itself —mere existence as such—may not be worth living; it depends on the "liver", the value we give to our life. Our real immortality lies not in the survival of a transient self, but in our identification with the principles of Goodness and Truth, which have a validity and permanence beyond the "changing scenes of life". The Buddhist ethic agrees with the Humanist in its condemnation of the craving for eternal life, or for total extinction as being equally false. It teaches that "there lurks in transient form immortal bliss" This "bliss" is revealed in the vision of the artist and in poetic inspiration. Our true soul is after all not a separate self, a metaphysical entity, it consists of our daily aspirations, our character, our thoughts, words and deeds. It is here we may transform "all common things, each day's events that with the hour begin and end". Buddha tells a wavering disciple that this is the supreme moment:

> "If in this present time of grace
> You do not reach the happy state
> Long will you suffer deep remorse!"

It is just here we may transform, give a wider meaning to, this craving for the immutable and eternal when we discover it with us here and now rather than a consumation to be realized in some future state. If we have an aim that is rooted in eternity, we need not mind the transiency of life. And this may be the ever widening vision by which we may find the satisfactions of this life, and also find the real answer to life's transiency.

R. J. JACKSON

[The humanist holds that values and principles are man made and change as man changes and it is for this reason that he holds that the circumstance of the preoccupation of man with the consideration of what is good is a legitimate one, and moreover, a profitable one, which would not be the case if it was merely contemporary man's whimsey about something that was eternal.—Ed.]

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The Manchester Humanist Fellowship is holding a Social Evening with dinner and dance on December 9th, 5.30 to 10.15 p.m., with Mr. C. Bradlaugh Bonner as the principal guest. Tickets 10/-, or for Social only, 2/-.

# ETHICAL UNION CONFERENCE AT HIGH LEIGH

## 16th & 17th September, 1950

The Ethical Union held a most successful week-end conference at High Leigh, Hoddesdon, which was attended by eighty persons. Very noticeable was the substantial proportion of younger people and the keenness of the discussions. Three distinct subjects were taken; the following is a summary made by J. Henry Lloyd of the papers and discussions.

### NEW FRONTIERS OF FEMINISM

The Saturday evening session was opened by Dora Russell, the chair being taken by Mr. E. H. Elkan, who gave a warm welcome to the visitors, new and old.

Mrs. Russell pointed out the difficulty of later generations knowing anything about the history of the Feminist movement, but nevertheless there was need for some perspective in thinking about it. She thought that we in this country, its cradle, should be ashamed that we were now behind some countries where women had been emancipated in ways still under discussion here. As a definition she described as a Feminist a person who advocated the rights and interests of women. Like social movements of any kind, Feminism was dependent upon a reasonably stable and prosperous state of society.

Prior to the modern suffrage movement, there had been individual thinkers like Mary Wolstencroft and charitable women whose social work had opened their eyes to the low status of women in general. Their experience had led them to examine their own position and to formulate the rights to own property, to own themselves and to develop their minds. She referred to *Peregrine Pickle* as giving a striking picture of the eighteenth century "lady of quality". In the first stage of the revolt it was natural that women should feel that they must earn a living in any way but by sex and maternity. There was a modern illustration of this point in Barry's play *The Twelve Pound Look*.

Racial and economic conditions still made it difficult for us to appreciate the position of women in backward countries. In forming some kind of measure of progress and in determining new frontiers it was necessary to recognise the successive stages: first, to get similar education to men and to undertake similar jobs; second, to secure economic independence. Thus the assumption was built up that women were human beings earning and living their own lives and having certain rights, including that of jobs being open to men or women. There was, however, a danger that this assumption should be accepted as a complete view, because it left out the emotional aspect of life. There was also the ambiguity of words like "equal", sometimes interpreted as "identical".

In the 1920's a new attitude began to be developed and women approached individual and social problems with a view to a distinctive contribution as women, as was illustrated in the work of Eleanor Rathbone in seeking to improve the economic position of the family. Attention was also focussed on the position of women as wives and mothers as expressed in the development of the Maternity and Child Welfare service and the work of Dr. Marie Stopes for Birth Control. The latter should be regarded not only as further emancipation of women as individuals but as means to creative motherhood. After the Maternity and Child Welfare Act of 1918, came the vote.

Hence the recognition that the emancipation of women was essentially a matter of the wife and mother as well as of women as citizens and workers. There followed a sense of the need for a philosophic background to the relations of men and women. The present body of thought was masculine. Women's psychology was distorted by man-made conceptions of social life:

women thus became more like men and developed "masculinism". Therefore, despite improvements in maternity and child welfare, in the larger questions of national and international policy the woman's point of view was not being effective. This resulted in the tragic anomaly that women were now required to make up the deficiencies in man-power for purposes of destruction.

Fascism and Nazism were morbid manifestations of male conceptions. The ideology of Industrialism was also made possible by man-made conceptions of social life. Women naturally reacted against these things.

In concluding her address, Mrs. Russell referred to the programme of the "Six Point Group" and her view of the present position and aims of Feminism. The first function of the women's movement was to ensure that the human race had the chance of survival by Peace. Basic equality, social, political and economic, between men and women should include such aims as equality in marriage and the guardianship of children, the abolition of violence and coercion in education and the substitution of co-operation, and the principle of coupled voting (i.e. public bodies to be constituted of equal numbers of men and women). Women were necessary to ensure peace, prosperity and happiness in the community, and there were vistas of duties beyond the home, to submerged classes and races.

In the discussion, F. Norman, A. D. Howell Smith, J. Guilfoyle Williams, Mrs. Norman, H. Michaelis, M. L. Burnet, Louise Gerard, Miss Walmsley, J. Henry Lloyd and Mora Burnet took part and the following points were touched upon: problem of population pressure and need for birth control in some areas of world and need for greater bluntness in dealing with Roman Catholic opposition; legal payment of wives might create undesirable position of employer and servant and impair comradeship of marriage; Feminists who claimed that men and women were the same were as wrong as anti-feminist men; need for sex and marriage education; deprecation of anti-man attitude; Ethical Union pamphlet on marriage without a woman contributor condemned; position of Feminism in U.S.A.; Aristophanes's view of women as possible preventers of war; need for education of older women in public affairs.

Mrs. Russell in her reply said she had rather over-stressed the respective places of men and women to make her points clear. She thought our great trouble was that Industrialism had run mad, ignoring the problem of Food Supply of which the population problem was another aspect. Men's limited view of women's functions was a real drag on progress of women and society; for example, the limited number of women Parliamentary candidates was due to male control of political parties. She thought there was muddled thinking in the U.S.A. and that Dr. Mead's recent book represented only a middle class point of view. That country was psychologically sick owing to industrialism and unbalanced married life. The great thing was to get back to the biological conception of life sublimated in society in the sense of belonging to one another.

## THE FUTURE OF HUMANISM

The Sunday morning session was opened by Mr. Hector Hawton with a paper on the Future of Humanism, with Mr. H. J. Blackham in the chair. Mr. Hawton began by referring to the mystery in which the origin of great movements is wrapped, the contemporary scoffing at a few "cranks" apparently out of joint with their times, the absence of any indication to pioneer or onlooker of possible success, and yet history subsequently proved to be on the side of the cranks. First the vision and overwhelming urge to transform the world and the faith that it could be done: this was the soul of the movement. Then the physical circumstances which made possible an organisation to embody the soul. Humanism was at present a soul without a body but physical circumstances which favoured its incarnation existed in the secularisation of society, the growth of scientific knowledge and the pressure of opinion for an alternative to the

great ideologies now arrayed for battle. To many people Capitalism appeared as organised burglary sanctified by superstition but they did not want to expel the burglars only to find themselves in the hands of the police nor did they wish to sweep away with the grosser superstitions the purer forms of religious idealism and the culture associated with them. There was, of course, the danger that in trying to find a body Humanism might lose its soul, as to which there were obvious lessons in the history of the great religions. Buddhism was an interesting case in point where the absence of science led to the acceptance of much misery and the metaphysics and superstition which made it tolerable. In the West an analogous situation occurred, with different emphasis and terminology, amounting to the thesis that as you could not increase your satisfactions you must decrease your wants; as the external world could not offer you real happiness, you must look within and cultivate a state of consciousness detached from human passions, leading in the extreme to asceticism. Buddha condemned both morbid austerity and the scholasticism of Indian metaphysics but once his simple ethical teaching and rationalism were embodied in an organisation, the metaphysics, superstitions and excesses against which he protested came back. There was the need to read with care this cautionary tale.

It was wise to profit by this example from the East because there was no impenetrable curtain to divide the development of the human mind and there was more interchange of ideas between east and west than was commonly supposed. If contemporary Humanism was to be genuinely international it must appeal not solely to the European, still less only to the Anglo-Saxon, but must show itself alive to the unique opportunity of bridging the gulf between East and West. This was particularly important because of the increasing sharing of scientific knowledge as an international currency. Educated Africans and Asiatics accept this framework and as most of them feel no compulsion to make it fit in with dogmas they are ripe for a Humanism consistent with racial equality.

The Humanism which the Ethical Movement is struggling to formulate proposes to reject both Christianity and Communist Marxism as alternatives and by implication rejects the equivalents to the Christian Church in other continents. Its appeal is to the same profound sense of the unity of man, the same fundamental desire to bring life more abundantly to the mass of mankind that moved the great religious geniuses in the past. The difference is in the means to satisfy these impulses: we have a surer method. The time in which we may hope to make our voice heard is running short but we had now some of the material circumstances required for the institutional embodiment of such a system of thought. The view was sometimes expressed that there were only two alternatives before the world, Russian Communism or American Capitalism. While the world had so shrunken that it was necessary to take a global view, the choice in the form stated was an example of false antithesis or the fallacy "Either—or—". The argument of Communists and Catholics "he that is not for us is against us" was the logic of fanaticism and totalitarianism and might mean the contention that all minority effort was a waste of time because Truth was on the side of the big battalions. Life has, however, been enriched by such diversity of thought as is denied by the monolithic systems of Rome and Moscow.

Apart from the theoretic criticism of the "either/or" doctrine, recent political events had shown that the two-worlds view was untrue. Pandit Nehru had demonstrated its falsity by taking a third line and had proved himself a better humanist than such representatives of the "free" world as General MacArthur or Chiang-kai-shek and Co. Rejecting Communism and Christianity, we put ourselves outside these great camps. Militarily we can win no great victories but even those who can are also concerned to gain sympathy for their aims. Nehru was negligible in a military sense but his courageous stand had led to Truman's rebuff to MacArthur over

Formosa and to those responsible for the talk about a "preventive war". Ideologically, there never was a better opportunity for Humanism, Its ideological war would not only be directed against the ideology of Russia but against the racialism of South Africa, the Fascism of Spain and Argentina, against cruelty, corruption and ignorance, wherever found.

We must begin with a clear statement of our aims, devise a new type of organisation and find the money to establish it. The success of the Christian Church was largely due to the combination of subtle theology with an astute organisation. The numerous mystery cults with which early Christianity competed sometimes had subtle theology, sometimes sound organisation, but rarely both together. To formulate a philosophy was a difficult and lengthy process and possibly time would not permit it. War of unimaginable ferocity might engulf all our schemes. Our present duty was to do our utmost to prevent such a catastrophe. This could not be done by oversimplifying issues as Right or Wrong, Civilisation or Barbarism. Particularly must we be on our guard against the fallacy of "Either/or" in the form of "Total war or Total Peace". A cold war was tolerable, a shooting war could be endured, but Atomic War would be the *reductio ad absurdum* of all war, because the weapons we use would explode in our hands. (Mr. Hawton discussed at some length the terrible potentialities of the Atomic Bomb not only in the immediate destruction of human life and institutions but in the incalculable continuing and possible spreading contamination of radio activity thus let loose. He felt that humanists had a special duty to remove the dangerous ignorance that prevailed on this subject. If the mass of the people knew the truth and still insisted on the use of such a weapon at least they would do so with their eyes open and our consciences would be clear).

The dangers that confront us, the fact that we were living through a revolution of ever increasing speed, constitute the material conditions for the emergence of a new way of life. The social system that reached its zenith in the 19th century was plainly collapsing and there seemed no way of saving it. We were in the period of a great historical transformation like the fall of the Roman Empire. Communism was spreading as Christianity spread of its own inner strength until Constantine imposed it from above by armed dictatorship. A similar parallel existed in the idealistic faith that in the early Christians brought to the dispossessed compared with the totalitarian religion Christianity became in the fourth century: a similar recoil from reason and a failure of nerve. Classical Humanism was then almost destroyed. It was possible that such a dark period was before us. Humanism might once more be driven underground. If so, one could be confident it would rise again as it did in the Renaissance. It would re-emerge because it was not an artificial or transient thing but the permanent expression of man's natural striving for equilibrium and wholeness. History, however, never exactly repeats itself. Pagan philosophy broke down under the dynamic onslaught of Christianity because it had nothing to offer a desperate world but an attitude of mind, indifferent or helplessly resigned to social corruption, while its science was too immature to be of practical significance in the terrible crisis through which Western man was passing . The situation for Humanism today was vastly different, mainly due to the advance of Science—itself an off-spring of Humanism. A scientific culture is not merely an attitude of mind or soul without a body but a source of material power and has developed sufficiently to constitute a real alternative to the fundamentally unscientific culture of orthodox Marxism and orthodox Christianity. The latter is disintegrating like the Pagan culture it once overthrew. He disagreed with Croce in saying that we cannot help calling ourselves Christians. This vital issue was confused by identifying Christianity with "Western values" and the reason for drawing attention to the changing East was to emphasise that

there were other values and another living tradition besides Christianity which claims world allegiance.

The task of the Humanist was to make these issues clear, to bring out social consciousness, to put the central questions so vividly that every honest man must take sides. If you are not a Marxist, Christian, Hindu or Mohammedan, what are you? Do you accept the fact that the age-long myths have been exploded? Do you want to use the inexhaustible wealth of knowledge we possess to save not only individual souls but the world itself from the catastrophe which threatens it? Do you know we are living through a revolution? Do you prefer to shut your eyes? Do you want a rich, well-rounded life, a fully integrated personality? Are you fired by the dream of a world in which knowledge is ultimately guided by love? You cannot realise all this through Communism of the Russian pattern or through a Christianity that seeks to maintain itself by Atomic Bombs.

Tens of thousands of people in all lands are turning to such ideals as ours blindly as a flower turns to the light, they are Humanists without knowing it. How can we make them aware that their souls are not naturally Christian, or Hindu, but Humanist? First we must articulate their aspirations and then give them a local habitation and a name. We must clarify our message and define the limits within which various philosophies can be properly described as humanist, but these limits must be elastic. There are types of philosophical idealism as well as materialism which fall within humanist tradition. It should not be so dogmatic as to exclude everyone who professes a belief in God which would exclude some of its greatest minds such as Erasmus, Petrarch, Spinoza, Goethe, Voltaire and Paine. Naturalism should not be so narrow that we are left with only the second rate. Once more we must be on our guard against the fallacy of "either/or". It is oversimplification to demand "either Atheism or Deism" there are other alternatives and the choice we must make is a personal decision.

The time is ripe for the creation of a Centre for World Humanism, an intellectual clearing house that will help men of goodwill to resolve some of their perplexities and find their place in the new world that is taking shape. One of the most urgent needs is the recovery of a sense of purpose. "I couldn't care less" expresses the intellectual nihilism to which so many have been reduced by the debunking of what was formerly held sacred. In moments of crisis the palpable untruth of this attitude is exposed as when a hundred men are trapped in a coal mine and the imagination of a whole country is stirred. The instant response of the rescuers and the crowds at the pithead disprove the notion that human nature is totally depraved.

The Humanist appeals to the facts of experience that what unites men is more important than what divides them and this was an aspect of unity in the Cosmos. There was evil in it, the evil of pain and frustration, but ultimately evil was self defeating. Notwithstanding the remorseless passage of time we had the assurance that what is valuable in the transient is objectified in the future and that we are all evolving centres of activity in a vast cosmic process moving to deeper and richer modes of living to which there is no final completion. The religion of the Humanist lies in his intuitive awareness of this urge within himself, his share in the total process in its creative straining towards higher levels of experience and value. Humanism has a poetry and even a mysticism of its own, found in Bruno, Goethe, Spinoza, Wordsworth, Shelley, Beethoven and Bach. A truly global Humanism would not disdain some of the insights of China and India. But the Humanist is a man of action. He disagreed with the "tragic" view of life. No dynamic movement could be established on stoical pessimism. Humanism is an attempt to see life clearly as a whole: its practice rests on a quiet, unshakeable confidence that good can be attained. In this most critical turning point in history we offer a discouraged and bewildered world hope, not despair.

In the discussion which ensued, J. G. Williams, A. D. Howell Smith, M. L. Burnet, H. Michaelis, Louise Gerard, Dora Russell, Miss Rotherham, F. L. Glaser, Mrs. Norman, F. Norman and J. H. Lloyd took part. Points raised included: the importance of distinguishing between the views of individual scientists and the scientific attitude in seeking knowledge; the criteria with regard to disputable matters—is it inconsistent with Humanism, is it practicable?; the sense of joy in meeting the challenge of the uncertainties of life; toleration as passive indifference or active desire to find common ground; truth at the mercy of propaganda made majorities; desirability of clearing our own minds before attempting to appeal to outsiders; urgency of Humanist message and desirability of avoiding undue abstract philosophic discussion; a plea for stoical pessimism; desirability of speedy preparation of concise statement of essentials of Humanist position, to be followed at leisure by fuller statement embodying philosophical background; discussion of Humanism in action as a guide to limits of toleration within the movement.

## FINDING A TREATMENT FOR JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

At the Sunday afternoon session Mr. D. H. Stott gave the opening address, Mora Burnet being in the chair. Mr. Stott said he proposed to deal mainly with the principles, psychological and ethical, which would determine our administrative action rather than the latter itself. The basic question was: Why do people become delinquent? There were divergent views as to the reasons. "Compulsive" stealing was so called because as no rational motive was known, the thief must be assumed to have been compelled by some hidden force, and its characteristic was that the thief really did not want the article stolen. People sometimes stole in a manner inviting detection: this was very common among delinquent youths. Other crime represented a deliberate "going to the bad" with the certainty of arrest and punishment, following a sense of grievance. In view of modern methods of detection, no intelligent person would calculatingly enter on a life of crime and therefore it must be assumed that the burglar must find some emotional satisfaction in it over and above material gain. The traditional "common sense" view fails to explain persistent crime among youths or to guide us in its prevention and the rehabilitation of the criminal. Does the occasional lapse or petty dishonesty differ essentially from breakdown delinquency and persistent crime? He thought that was only a question of degree. Behind a series of petty unimportant thefts could be found the same kind of unhappiness and just as deep-lying a motivation as behind the major spectacular type of crime.

As an alternative method of investigation he asked what keeps people from stealing? One must have a knowledge of right and wrong, and there was great need for more thoroughgoing moral education. But there was something more needed than training. Chronic domestic pilfering always has much deeper causes than just wanting the articles stolen. The consequences of crime also act as deterrents yet it happens that even on occasions when it would be possible to be dishonest without discovery we are not. There was evidently another factor, the traditional moral sense or conscience which made us not want to be dishonest. Few people, including delinquents, will steal from those towards whom they have good feelings. Within the fellowship circle we recognise obligations but the characteristic of many delinquents was that although they might have a small circle within which this moral code applied they have positive bad feelings or at any rate lack of good feeling towards people in general. Our moral sense really consists in the quality of our feelings towards our fellow men and that is why we can be honest towards one person and dishonest towards another. "I have no conscience so far as he is concerned" is often said. It was not sufficient to say of a delinquent that he had no conscience to which you could appeal and was therefore a hopeless cause. We can improve his morality by inducing him to feel

better towards people. Our course of treatment consists in giving him good human experience to counteract those bad ones which have made him unfeeling and malicious. This should be the aim of Approved School and Borstal training.

How does this apply to our public moral sense? For every man or woman who steals from an individual there are dozens who steal from public undertakings or large impersonal commercial undertakings. A purely personal morality, in terms of feelings towards people, was not a sufficient safeguard against public dishonesty. What then should be the basis of our public moral sense? We react towards the public body as we do towards an individual and respond to what we regard as its niggardliness by dishonesty. Dishonesty can become a habit, starting perhaps as a bad attitude to a particular person but becoming a general response whenever the opportunity to pilfer presents itself, irrespective of the sufferer. On the other hand, so can honesty become a habit. Taking it for granted in personal relationships we make it a general rule of conduct or principle, reinforced by feelings of personal honour and dignity. Various elements of personality restrain us from dishonesty: early training, our standing with others and our own self respect; and the accepted moral code works upon and strengthens our natural morality. Most important of these influences is the instinctive wish to be on good terms with our fellow men.

Why then do these factors making for honesty fail to operate? He had sought the answer by studying youths sent to an approved school after repeated appearances in court. Many came from obviously bad home situations but even in apparently good homes a boy's circumstances might be intensely unhappy. He might feel that his parents lacked true affection or interest in him, he may have been left to the care of a relative or an institution. What was the effect on a child of living in a home where he feels he is not wanted or is a positive encumbrance, without affection or security? He fears to allow himself to love or trust anyone; feeling unfairly treated he sees no reason why he should play fair; doubting his parents' loyalty he allows himself no loyalty. He finds it easier to harden himself than to suffer the strain of continual uncertainty and anxiety and so he sets out to be callous and suppress those natural good feelings which enable us to get on together and induce us to respect the rights and property of others. Worse still, as this course compels him to run counter to his natural social impulses, the unhappy discouraged person cannot remain just indifferent to his fellow beings, he can only smother his need for human affection by hating people and by acting in a way that people will hate him. Such children look out for hostility and return it. The majority of approved school boys and girls were not callous and hostile in this acute degree but their unhappy human experiences had implanted in them a capacity for feeling and acting badly. In their quest for excitements to enable them momentarily to forget their unhappiness they resort to delinquent forms of adventure. Most have not given up the struggle for affection but because of long standing insecurity or recurrent phases of being on bad terms with parents they are quick to fly to resentment and in such moods apt to commit hostile and delinquent acts later regretted. The unwanted or insecure child also develops intense feelings of inferiority which means that he is always struggling in a frantic and desperate way for status, hence the practice of boasting and showing off, leading to possible incitement by mischief makers into foolhardy or delinquent acts. Long exposure to an unhappy human situation produces defects and lack of balance of character which either by destroying our natural morality or by rendering us prone to impulsive acts can make us into thieves.

Two universal characteristics of the criminal might be given as a capacity for bad feeling or at least callousness towards people and a habit of yielding to the overpowering emotional need of the moment, regardless of his own best interests

and often of eventual punishment. His foolishness goes very deep, it represents an urgent attempt to satisfy an element in his personality, the basic need for status. In a lesser degree we are all inclined to yield to rash impulses, such as taking unjustified risks to show off a new car. There is only a difference of degree between our everyday follies and the life wrecking follies of the criminal. This also might relate the occasional lapses of the ordinary high spirited and adventurous youngster and the persistent offences of the breakdown delinquent. The desire to show off, to be in with the gang, or even the ordinary boyhood rivalries, get the better of him and the possible consequences are forgotten. One act of punishment or a simple appearance in a juvenile court is sufficient to impress upon him the danger he runs and the magistrate who draws attention to his folly or gives him a salutary scare is applying the proper treatment. There is no need in such cases to go beyond the common sense level of analysis. With the persistent delinquent, the procedure must be different. The analysis must go deeper to understand how things have got to such a pitch, which means studying the deleterious emotional influences which have produced such a character. An objection to this interpretation of criminality was that a great many people had unhappy childhoods without becoming criminals. This objection overlooked the very important factor that every child unhappy at home instinctively looks elsewhere for a sympathetic adult and insofar as an effective substitute for parental love and care is found early enough the personality of the child is rescued. But there are other people who have failed to find adequate substitutes and have suffered. Such persons might become selfish and disagreable with no fellowship or loyalty to offer to others but they managed to keep on the right side of the law because they had found ways of exercising their ill-feeling by legal means.

A problem interesting clinical psychologists was that very similar symptoms of defective personality were found in the neurotic and the delinquent. What then leads to the choice between neurosis, hysterical incapacity or shoplifting? These forms of breakdown were only alternatives in the sense that the drunkard might have a preference for particular forms of alcohol. The view was held that while the delinquent turned his bad attitude out upon the world, the neurotic turns his in upon himself. In developing an inability to eat or a hysterical paralysis, the neurotic was punishing himself but this was incidental to his main objective of punishing other people by forcing them to make him the object of inconvenience and expense to them. So long as his incapacity was not recognised as having this object he saved his self-respect which by becoming a criminal he would lose. It was, however, dangerous openly to expose such shamming (e.g. in a young lad) because of the risk of deep humiliation and the sense of having lost the respect of parents. As a formula it might be said that however difficult a person's emotional state might be, so long as he retained enough self respect to attach importance to other people's opinion of him and to his own opinion of himself, he would prefer neurosis to dilinquent breakdown. Further, however much childhood unhappiness might condition a person to bad human attitudes, he would not voluntarily worsen his state by any form of breakdown so long as there remains some feasible way of getting along in life.

There may therefore be two practically identical character types, the one, in unfavourable circumstances, becoming a criminal; the other, with better opportunities, making a successful career and achieving fame.

In concluding his address, Mr. Stott dwelt very candidly on the personality and circumstances of Lord Byron in illustration of the themes just discussed.

The discussion was taken up by Mrs. Norman, J. Lee, J. Guilfoyle Williams, H. J. Blackham, Alfred Packer, A. D. Howell Smith, Dr. Barasi, H. Michaelis, David R. Carter, and J. P. Lawrenson who contributed these points:

The case of spoilt children; whether any home was better than an institution; effect of women's full time employment on family life; evil consequences of sense of inferiority; prison as a "home from home"; youth centres and compulsory training; "spoiling" not necessarily a sign of affection; social and political factors making for delinquency; possible assistance of general public in rehabilitation of delinquent; limitation of numbers at approved schools; treatment during probationary period; psychological consequences of punishment. In addition to commenting on these matters, Mr. Stott in his reply made the general point that the first principle of treatment for the delinquent was the provision of stable good human experience, with a chance for the child to develop normally. Probation officers had a large number of cases to deal with and the need was to concentrate not on the child but on the family situation as the key to the problem.

The Conference concluded with a social session in which Ilse Regence gave a Mozart violin sonata, Mr. Burall and Mr. Blackham gave prose and verse readings and Dorothy Lester led community singing.

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### HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL SOCIETY

As will be seen in Announcements the Hampstead Ethical Society is celebrating its 50th Anniversary on Sunday, November 19th with a meeting in which speakers will deal with the history of the Society and the future prospects of the Movement. The meeting will conclude with a social. All members and friends of the Movement are asked to participate in this celebration.

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**The views expressed in this journal are not necessarily those of the Council of The Ethical Union**

## THE ETHICAL UNION

4a Inverness Place, London, W.2. Tel: Bayswater 2125.
Office hours for enquirers 2—5 Mondays to Fridays.

**Dynamic Peace Making:** Course of three lectures arranged by the Ethical Union, in the Library, Conway Hall, on Mondays at 7 p.m.

Nov. 27—H. L. Beales: Orderly Access to the Means of National Living.
Dec. 4—M. L. Burnet: Doctrines, Values and Goals.
11—Geoffrey Goodwin: Keeping the Peace.

## THE ETHICAL CHURCH

4a Inverness Place, Queensway, Bayswater. Sundays at 6.30 p.m. (Note time).

Nov. 5—H. J. Blackham: Value and Liberty of the Person.
12—Virginia Flemming & H. J. Blackham: Enjoyment and Sacrifice.
19—Virginia Flemming: Guiding Principles in Sexual Behaviour.
26—Virginia Flemming & H. J. Blackham: The Education of a Humanist.

The Friday Club meets at 7, lecture 7.45.

Nov. 3—Humorous writing: Paul Jennings.
10—Debate.
17—The Work of the National Library of the Blind: Miss Alexander, Librarian and Secreteray.
24—Sonata Recital: Anthony Cleveland, violin. Ronald Tremain, piano.

## THE FOREST GROUP

Hon. Secretary, Miss I Percival, 145 Holly Lodge Mansions, N.6.

Nov. 5—Autumn Tints Ramble. Central line to Loughton 11.30. Lunch 12.30 Ivy Cottage, High Beach.
19—Visit to Kenwood House. Meet on terrace 2.15. Tea 1/6 at Kenwood. Join Hampstead Ethical Society for 50th Anniversary Celebrations, 7.45. Names for tea should be sent in advance to Hon. Sec.

## FRENCH ETHICAL SOCIETY

Hon. Secretary, Mlle. M. L. Delbende, 78 Braxted Park, S.W.16. (STR 5984). Meeting 3 p.m. in the Clubroom, Conway Hall.

Nov. 12—Gabrielle Latour: La Flute de Jade, Conference-Recital.

## HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL SOCIETY

Hon. Sec., Mr. E. H. Elkan, 42a Westbere Rd., N.W.2. (HAM 6920)

at 7.45 at Barclay House, 783 Finchley Rd., (near Regal Cinema, Golders Green). Buses 2 & 28, Trolleybuses 645, 660.

Nov. 5—Mrs. Dora Russell: Education for Happiness.
11—At 42a Westbere Road, N.W.2. (off Minster Road, Shoot-up Hill—buses 16, 60). J. F. Horrabin: Three Englishmen—Hogarth, Blake, Byron.
19—50th Anniversary Meeting. Speakers: J. F. Horrabin, H. J. Blackham, A. F. Dawn, E. H. Elkan. Followed by Social Evening.

## MANCHESTER HUMANIST FELLOWSHIP

Hon. Sec., Mr. Wallace Owen, 2 Harley Ave., Manchester 14.

At 3.30 Cross Street Chapel, Manchester.

Nov. 4—F. J. Corina: The International Peril.
18—G. F. Jaeger: Why I left the Church.

## SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY

Chairman, Oliver Kingsnorth. Hon. Sec., Mrs. Dornan, 51 Preston Road, S.E.19. Meetings at 158 Queens Road, Peckham at 3 p.m. on last Sunday in month.

Nov. 26—W. Margrie: Evolution or Stagnation.

## SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1. Sunday mornings at 11.

Nov. 5—H. L. Beales: The Survival of Privilege.
12—S. K. Ratcliffe: Mysticism—Genuine and Bogus.
19—Archibald Robertson: The Need of Historical Background.
26—Lord Chorley: Ethics and Politics.

Discussion Circle Meetings on Tuesdays at 7 p.m.

Nov. 7—Martin Davidson: Has Christian Modernism any Future?
14—Doris Chaplin: The Psychological Approach to Delinquency.
21—Maurince Burton: Darwinism Re-examined.
28—S. K. Ratcliffe: The Demise of English Poetry.

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